

is from the east, it must, I think, at the same time be admitted that all its appropriateness and all its beauty, as found in our mediæval cathedrals, is wholly due to the talent and ingenuity of our northern architects, who wrought it into those forms of beauty and grace which we all now so fully appreciate and so universally admire."

JAMES FERGUSSON.

STIR IN METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

THE following report of the proceedings of the court will be read with more than usual interest. Mr. Hertlet has resigned his appointment; Mr. Phillips, the surveyor, has thought it necessary to denounce the proceedings of the commission, and a general disorganization prevails. The length of the report, and of some other papers in our number, prevents us saying any more at this moment than that circumstances have since occurred which prove strikingly the justness of our opinion, before this expressed, that the constitution of the commission is not exactly in all respects what it ought to be.

A general court was held on Thursday, 21st, at the Court-house, Greek-street, Bobo-square; the Earl of Carlisle in the chair.

The Drainage of Goulton-street and the Neighbourhood of Whitechapel.—A long report was presented by Messrs. Phillips and Gatto, surveyors, on the state of Goulton-street, and the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, which stated that their attention had been especially directed to an area of about 9 acres in that vicinity, with a population of 3,674 persons, or about an average of 9 to each house. The consequence of this overcrowding was the accumulation of more than the usual amount of filth, and the cause of much disease, filth, and misery. Very many of the houses have neither yards, sinks, nor other conveniences, and no sort of provision for drainage or ventilation. The effect upon the constitution of the inmates was evidently indicated in their countenances, and rendered them susceptible of those fearful diseases which were accustomed to attach themselves to such spots. Being aware that cholera had in many places recently re-appeared, and that several malignant cases had occurred in this place, they urged upon the commissioners the importance and necessity of enforcing sanitary regulations without delay. To effect this they recommended that notice should be given immediately of making a special sewer-line, under the 51st section, to lay down sewer-pipes, and to serve notices upon the occupiers to supply and destroy the existing cesspools, to subvert water closets, and to construct efficient drains into the main pipe sewer.

Mr. Chadwick moved that the report be received and adopted.—Sir H. de la Beche supported the motion, and said that the Ordnance Survey Committee were using every effort to carry out the wishes of the Court, by a progress of the subterranean survey, in connection with the Ordnance survey, and in a very short time they hoped to bring forward a large area of the metropolitan district.—viz., the Westminster district. The maps were now in a proper state, and they had taken into their serious consideration the necessity of adopting certain principles in lieu of the present mischievous system, and thus give in their operations relief of a very substantial kind. Although the whole of Westminster was below high-water tide, they had no doubt whatever as to rendering the drainage of it as perfect as that of any other district in the metropolis, and at the same time to utilise the sewage here collected. The present lines of railway would afford them great facilities for such a purpose to get rid of their sewage, and concurrently with the purification of the river Thames. For the suburban district, too, of Hammersmith, means would be devised for altogether removing the sewage from it, to throw it back into the country, instead of, as at present, falling into the Thames. The district comprised between Battersea and Deptford had also received their most anxious consideration: they were collecting all the information requisite and essential for the plans, and they had required their consulting engineer, who was conversant and acquainted with these principles, to give a general statement, plan, and estimate for carrying out these views. That nothing might be done hastily, these plans would be submitted to the Court, and he might now observe that the Sewers Committee were unanimous in their desire to relieve the Thames, and to throw the sewage into the country. He trusted that not more than 9 months would elapse before they should

lay before the Court a plan for the entire relief of the whole of Westminster.

Mr. Slaney urged the adoption of immediate measures for the relief of the poor.

Mr. Chadwick said there was every disposition to afford immediate relief to the poor, but in many cases when relief had been brought to their doors the landlords would not avail themselves of it by making the necessary junctions.

Lord Ebrington said that legal proceedings occupied a considerable time. As regarded, for instance, the Bermondsey district, belonging to the Surrey and Kent division, there were upwards of 70 miles of open ditches, 3 feet in width, exalting the most noxious and pestilential gases, which embraced a vast area, and even were they to afford only temporary relief, it was not so short a proceeding as Mr. Slaney might imagine.

The Earl of Carlisle thought they should consider how far it would be safe to undertake these works without the chance of the ground having to be gone over again.

Mr. Chadwick replied, that in this district there was a very good system, and the drainage might be effected with little trouble as a permanent work.

Mr. Hertlet, with great submission, hoped he might be allowed to state, that the officers of the commission were not in a position to carry out these works.

Mr. Slaney was of opinion that they should use great caution in their proceedings.

Mr. Chadwick said, if they waited for a perfect combination, they might postpone all their works to an indefinite period, and in every step a difficulty was to be encountered. One of these difficulties was as to a supply of water, and he thought that should be met at once.—A long discussion ensued on the legality of the commission obtaining a supply of water, independently of the water companies.—The motion that the works recommended be adopted was then put and agreed to.

Resignation of Mr. Hertlet, the Clerk.—Mr. Hertlet said, in the course of the discussion he had taken the liberty, respectfully, of offering a few observations; but now, in consequence of the vote they had just come to, he felt that he had no alternative but to tender his resignation of the office he had the honour to hold. Mr. Hertlet then read the following document:—

"My lords and gentlemen.—After a public service of eighteen years, thirteen of which have been passed in this department, I take leave most respectfully to tender you my resignation. For the great kindness and consideration which you have shown me, and especially for that which you have shown me in the course of my recent appointment to be your clerk, I am deeply indebted to you, and I trust that I may carry with me into private life the kindly feeling of which I have had so many proofs."

"My lords and gentlemen, it is only proper mention on my part to request that, although I do not now present, I may not be considered to have withdrawn, and that I may have to a person under the Metropolitan Sewers Act. I had expended a few months' labour in the course of my services to the Court, and I am sure that the Commission, which will be maintained out of place, I have withdrawn them."

It remains for me only to request that a successor may be appointed as soon as possible. I shall, of course, be most happy to render every assistance which my health will permit until the appointment is filled up."

Mr. Buller expressed his surprise at this sudden step, and his regret for losing so efficient an officer as Mr. Hertlet.

Mr. Slaney regretted that the communication had been made without notice, and the loss of so excellent an officer. The commission had had the benefit of Mr. Hertlet's experience, and they had hitherto worked well together. If he persisted in his determination, they must, of course, accept it; but he hoped he might be induced to withdraw it; for considering the difficult and arduous situation in which he had been placed, he must say that Mr. Hertlet's services had given great satisfaction.

Mr. Chadwick thought that this subject might be much better and fully discussed in a committee.

Mr. Hertlet said that the establishment was not equal to carrying out their duties efficiently, and however willing he might be to go fast, he could not keep pace with them consistently with the opinions he entertained. He was willing even to gallop with them if it were necessary, but he was determined not to do so blindfolded.

The Earl of Carlisle said there could be but one opinion as to the value of Mr. Hertlet's services.

The further consideration of the subject was referred to a committee of the whole court.

The Ordnance Survey.—On some resolutions of the Ordnance Survey Committee being read,

Mr. Phillips, the surveyor, wished to be allowed to make a communication upon the subject, and upon leave being granted, a startling document was read; which stated that an assertion made at the last court, that a three-foot pipe would carry off all the sewage of the metropolis, had gained currency through the public press, and was now passing through the provinces with great rapidity. Such a statement, bearing the authority of the commission, which was wholly impracticable, and so contrary to fact, was calculated to bring the commission into ridicule, and destroy public confidence. It also

condemned the converging system of drainage recommended for Westminster, and pointed out how, by a mere nominal sum per annum, payable for 20 years, a tunnel sewer might be constructed from Hammersmith to Woolwich Marshes, to take off the whole drainage of the metropolis by a regular and steady fall, and by this means the River Thames would be rendered as pure as it was 300 years ago. He said a just dissatisfaction was spreading, and he thought it time for him to speak out for the credit of the court and the reputation of its officers.

Sir H. de la Beche considered this course of proceeding on the part of an officer both unprecedented and unjustifiable, as the committee had come to no decision upon the subject. Until the Survey Committee had reported, these remarks were entirely out of place.

Mr. Chadwick said, the statement as to a three-foot pipe he had made on the authority of experiments made by Mr. Lovick, but that was only to apply to house-drainage, independently of storm or rain waters. Two reports, from Mr. Austin and Mr. Phillips, had been for some time before them, and they had taken the opinion of impartial engineers on their respective merits; but the present plan of Mr. Phillips was totally different, and of which they now heard for the first time.

Captain Dawson and several other commissioners reproached the course taken by Mr. Phillips.

A motion was then proposed and carried, that the letter should be referred (with that of Mr. Hertlet) to a committee of the whole court.

Reports were presented by Mr. Gatto on the drainage of Sydenham, and by Mr. Grant on the open ditches of the Kent and Surrey district.

The Cholera at Bermondsey.—A deputation of the Improvement Commissioners and ratepayers of Bermondsey attended the court on the subject of the recent cases of cholera in that parish. It having been represented to the Works Committee that the open ditches and mill streams were the main cause of the raging of this malady, the chief surveyor was ordered to attend immediately to the same, and he now presented a report, which showed that,—"The artificial streams are upwards of a mile in length, belonging to private persons, and have existed for upwards of 300 years. The tide is admitted into them in order to provide power for working the St. Saviour's Mill, Dockhead, and consequently they are periodically left dry. A branch running along Horsey-lane, a length of about 700 feet, and averaging 18 feet in width, contains an accumulation of putrid animal and vegetable matter, the refuse of house drainage and chemical works, and exposing on an evaporating surface of 7,000 feet in the midst of a densely-populated neighbourhood. Another branch running at the back of, and receiving the foul drainage of Albert-street, Bermondsey New Town, of about the same length and width, and more prejudicial to health than the branch above described, being immediately under the windows of the houses."

Mr. Dyles, one of the deputation, said there had been nine fatal cases of cholera in this neighbourhood within a few days; it was an insufferable nuisance, and highly dangerous to the public health.—Mr. Raines, owner of a paper mill, admitted that the stream was a nuisance, but if the supply of water was cut off, his mill would be stopped, and his workmen thrown out of employ.

Dr. Southwood Smith said he had the assurance of a medical practitioner, that he had under his charge twenty cases of cholera in this district, nine of which were fatal, within fifty yards of each other.

On Monday the deputation again attended the sitting of the Committee: Lord Ebrington in the chair. Several owners of property on the banks of the stream presented plans, showing how, if the water was withdrawn, their property would be injured, while the Improvement Commissioners contended that as steam power was now used, the water was only occasionally used to preserve a right to it, and to claim a compensation on the abolition of the streams.

It was suggested that an 18-inch pipe would carry sufficient water to supply all the parties concerned, which suggestion was agreed to.—Mr. Martin, the medical officer and registrar of the district, said that five cases of cholera had occurred since Thursday last, three of which were fatal.

It was ordered that the surveyor do take such steps as he may deem necessary, and specially report on the subject forthwith.

PAWNBROKERS' ALMSHOUSES.—The first stone of the Pawnbrokers' Almshouses was laid (at Forest Gate, Essex) on the 22nd, by the Lord Mayor. The architect, in the newspaper accounts, is said to be Mr. Francis. Some of our readers will remember the particulars given by us some time ago, when the selected design in the public competition which took place was thrown overboard, the estimates exceeding the amount stipulated in the conditions.*

* The remarks which followed the reading of the foregoing paper at the Institute are necessarily postponed. In the first part of the paper, p. 309, col. 3, for "Mr. Hoskins's testimony" read "Mr. Hoskins." The names of the prisoners in better known to our readers than that of the Ethiopian traveller, whence the mistake.